DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 632 CS 207 907

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TITLE Categories for Observing Language Arts Instruction (COLAI).
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 14p.; From author's Master's thesis, University of Alberta. For related documents, see CS 207 904-945.
PUB TYPE Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Observation Techniques; Classroom Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Arts; Measures (Individuals); Postsecondary Education; *Reading Instruction; *Time on Task
IDENTIFIERS *The Research Instruments Project

ABSTRACT

Designed to study individual use of time spent in reading during regularly scheduled language arts instruction in a natural classroom setting, this coding sheet consists of nine categories: (1) engagement, (2) area of language arts, (3) instructional setting, (4) partner (teacher or pupil(s)), (5) source of content, (6) type of unit, (7) assigned or chosen task, (8) rate of success, and (9) other activities. Students are observed for 30-second intervals on a rotation basis, and the behavior noted is coded in the appropriate column on the coding sheet. Validity, reliability, and normative data are included. (This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts, Volume 2," published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. The TRIP review, included here as an introduction to the instrument, describes the instrument's category (language arts), title, author, date, age range (applicable to any instructional situation), purpose, and characteristics.) (HTH)

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Categories for Observing Language Arts Instruction (COLAI).

The measurement instruments contained in this document have been reviewed in a monograph (cited below) edited by William T. Fagan, Charles Cooper, and Julie Jensen, for The Research Instruments Project (TRIP), and funded by a grant from the Trustees of the NCTE Research Foundation:

Measures for Research and Evaluation
in the
English Language Arts
Volume II

The purpose of the editors has been to select and review measurement instruments pertaining to all aspects of research and evaluation in the English language arts, e.g. language and language development, literacy, literature, reading (including comprehension, teacher-pupil interaction, etc.), writing, and teacher knowledge and attitudes. In order to make some of the actual instruments reviewed more readily available, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) has cooperated with the editors by processing selected instruments into the ERIC system (see the 42 documents assigned Clearinghouse accession numbers CS 207 904-945).

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CS 207907

Category: Teacher Knowledge/Attitude

Title: Categories for Observing Language Arts Instruction (COLAI)

Author: Julianna G. Benterud

Age Range: Any Instructional Situation

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To study individual use of learning time, with particular focus on time spent in reading during the time scheduled for Language Arts in a natural classroom setting.

Date of Construction: 1983

Physical Description: A coding sheet was devised on which the standardization of the moment of observation and of the interval between observations for each pupil was achieved by pre-marking the coding sheet in multi-second intervals. The study for which the coding sheet was devised involved four subjects, each of whom were observed as the beginning of a 30-second interval. That is, if subject 1 was observed at 9:00:00. subjects 2, 3, and 4 would be observed at 9:00:30, 9:01:00, and 9:01:30 respectively, with the rotation again beginning for subject 1, at 9:02:00. The behavior noted during the particular observation time was coded in the appropriate column on the coding sheet.

The coding sheet consisted of nine major columns. These columns with their subcategories are as follows:

1. Engagement
   (a) Definitely engaged (D)
   (b) Definitely not engaged (DN)
   (c) Can't tell (CT)
1. Area of Language Arts
   (a) Listening (L)
   (b) Speaking (S)
   (c) Viewing (V)
   (d) Writing (W)
   (e) Oral reading (Ro)
   (f) Silent reading (Rs)

3. Instructional setting
   (a) Whole group (WG)
   (b) Small group (SG)
   (c) Individual (I)
4. Partner
   (a) Teacher (T)
   (b) Pupil or pupils (P)
5. Source of content
   (a) Worksheet (WS)
   (b) Workbook (WB)
   (c) Basal reader (BR)
   (d) Library book (LB)
   (e) Chart (Ch)
   (f) Blackboard (BB)
   (g) Other (O)
6. Type of unit
   (a) Pictures (P)
   (b) Letters (L)
   (c) Isolated words (IW)
   (d) Isolated sentences (IS)
   (e) Connected discourse (CD)
7. Assigned or chosen task
   (a) Assigned general (AG)
   (b) Assigned specific (AS)
   (c) Chosen (Ch)
8. Rate of success
   (a) High success (H)
   (b) Medium Success (M)
   (c) Low success (L)
9. Other activities
   (a) Transition (T)
   (b) Wait (W)

Validity, Reliability, and Normative Data:

The observation categories are based on the underlying construct "Academic Learning Time" which originated in the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study conducted over the six years between 1972 and 1978 by the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (Berliner, 1979). ALT, defined as the amount of time a student spends attending to academic tasks while also performing at a high rate of success was shown to be a valid indicator of student learning on the basis of the high correlation between ALT ratings and achievement test scores. In addition, the ALT has the advantage over achievement tests of providing a means of assessing on-going, in-process learning.

Content validity was obtained for the COLAI by utilizing the overall structure of the coding system developed for the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study. Modifications were made on the basis of a pilot study conducted over a seven week period in five grade one classrooms.

Ecological validity may be claimed on the basis of the instrument being used in a natural class setting to collect data during the 600 minutes allocated to language arts instruction during a single week.

Interrater reliability based on the ratings of two independent observers for each of the nine major categories prior to and during the study resulted in coefficients of agreement ranging from .90 to .98 for a 70 minute observation period priod to the study, and between .94 and .98 for a 90 minute observation period during the study.

Related Documents:

Benterud, J. G. From First-Grader's Use of Reading Time During the Language Arts Period in Their Natural Classroom Setting. Unpublished Master's Theses. The University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 1983.

Berliner, D.C. "Tempus Educare." In P. L. Petersen and H. J. Walberg (Eds.), Research on Teaching: Concepts, Findings and Implications. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Coding Sheet # _____ Date _____ Lesson _____ Time _____

Pupil	Time Min	Time Sec	Degree of Engagement D	DN	CT	Area of L.A. L	S	V	W	R(O)	R(S)	Instruct. Setting WG	SG	I	Partner T	P	Source of Content WS	WB	BR	LB	Ch	BB	O	Type of Unit P	L	IW	IS	CD	Assigned or Chosen Assign. G	S	Ch	Rate of Success H	M	L	Other Activ. T	W	Remarks
Brian	0	00																																			
	2																																				
	4																																				
	6																																				
	8																																				
Robert	0	30																																			
	2	30																																			
	4	30																																			
	6	30																																			
	8	30																																			
Jerry	1	00																																			
	3																																				
	5																																				
	7																																				
	9																																				
Shawn	1	30																																			
	3	30																																			
	5	30																																			
	7	30																																			
	9	30																																			

Degree of Engagement
D = Definitely engaged
DN = Definitely not engaged
CT = Can't tell

Area of Language Arts
L = Listening
S = Speaking
V = Viewing
W = Writing
R(O) = Oral Reading
R(S) = Silent Reading

Instructional Setting
WG = Whole group
SG = Small group
I = Individual

Partner
T = Teacher
P = Pupil

Source of Content
WS = Worksheet
WB = Workbook
BR = Basal reader
LB = Library book
Ch = Chart
BB = Blackboard
O = Other

Type of Unit
P = Picture
L = Letter
IW = Isolated words
IS = Isolated sentences
CD = Connected discourse

Assigned or Chosen
Assigned G = General
S = Specific
Ch = Chosen

Rate of Success
H = High
M = Medium
L = Low

Other Activities
T = Transition
W = Wait

1. Engagement

Human beings are constantly engaged in something. The purpose of this category was to determine whether or not a student was on-task or engaged in the appropriate activity at any given time.

D = Definitely engaged

This category was checked if there was clear evidence that the pupil was engaged in the assigned or appropriate task at the time of observation. If the child was actively speaking, writing, or reading orally, he was considered to be engaged in that activity. Engagement in listening, viewing, and silent reading were more difficult to assess because of their covert nature. The child was coded as engaged in these activities if he appeared to be directing his attention toward the appropriate activity in observable ways such as following the appropriate activity visually, and was not engaged in some alternate activity.

DN = Definitely not engaged

This category was checked if there was a behavioral reason to indicate that the pupil was not engaged in the appropriate activity; that is, he was obviously engaged in some activity other than the one he was expected to be involved in. For example, if the student was expected to be involved in writing individually, off-task behaviors might include socializing, walking around the room, sharpening pencils, attending to distractions, reading an unrelated book, disturbing another pupil, etc.

CT = Can't tell

When there was no clear indication as to whether a pupil was or was not engaged inthe appropriate activity, or when there was conflicting evidence about involvement, the CT category was checked. Such instances could occur in listening, viewing, writing, or silent reading activities if the child appeared to be staring blankly, but may in fact have been listening or reflecting relevantly.

2. Area of Language Arts

L = Listening

If the student was expected to be receiving information or communication chiefly through the auditory mode, the L category was checked. When the activity was judged to be a listening activity, only the first four categories were relevant and therefore marked: degree of engagement, area of language arts, instructional setting, and partner. A note was generally made under "Remarks" specifying the type of listening activity.

S = Speaking

Classroom situations often involved a combination of listening and speaking. In these situations, the child was coded according to whether he had the opportunity for speaking or listening at the particular moment of observation. During class discussions, for example, most children are listening while one person speaks at a time. As in listening, only the first four categories were coded for a speaking activity, and the nature of the activity was noted under "Remarks".

V = Viewing

This category was reserved for coding activities in which the student's major involvement was in watching the presentation of material through means such as films, filmstrips, television, or a live play. Only the first three categories were coded in a viewing activity, and again, the type of activity was specified under "Remarks".

W = Writing

An activity was considered to be a writing activity if the child was expected to be putting some symbolization of ideas onto a writing surface. His symbolization might include pictures, lines, letters, or words. When coding a writing activity, the "Transition/Wait" category was omitted, and the "Partner" category was marked only if the student was writing a personal message to the teacher or to another pupil.

R (o) = Oral reading

This category was checked if the child was expected to be reading audibly. All categories except "Transitional/ Wait" were coded in relation to oral reading activities.

R (s) = Silent reading

Frequently, silent reading activities also involved written responses. If the child was definitely not engaged in either silent reading or writing at the moment of observation, the activity was coded according to whether it dominantly provided for silent reading, or was chiefly a writing activity with little reading. If the child was engaged in the silent reading/writing activity, he was coded as being engaged in the

one activity that was involving him at the moment of observation -- either silent reading or writing. All categories except "Partner" and "Transition/Wait" were coded in relation to silent reading.

3. Instructional Setting

WG = Whole group

This category was checked if the majority or all of the class was being instructed as a whole. Usually, the whole group was teacher-led, although it could also include instances where a child was presenting to the group, or where audio-visual materials were the source of instruction.

SG = Small group

The small group situation existed when less than half the class formed a group for instruction. Small groups could be directed similarly to large groups, but could also involve several students interacting together for the purposes of working through a project.

I = Individual

Individual involvement was coded when a pupil was working alone in writing, silent reading or viewing activities. Such activities have been commonly referred to as "seatwork" assignments, and are usually expected to be carried out independently with periodic supervision and guidance from the teacher. The individual setting also occurred in listening, speaking, and oral reading when a pupil was involved in these activities on a one-to-one basis with the teacher or another person.

4. Partner

This category was checked only in relation to listening, speaking, and oral reading activities, and in relation to writing only if the child was writing a personal communication to the teacher or to another child. In the case of speaking and oral reading in a group situation, both T and P could be checked as being involved in the interaction.

T = Teacher

P = Pupil or pupils

5. Source of Content

This category was marked only in relation to oral reading, silent reading, and writing activities.

WS = Worksheet

WB = Workbook

BR = Basal reader

LB = library book

Any book other than the basal reader was coded in this category.

Ch = Chart

BB = Blackboard

O = Other

If the source of content did not fit in any of the specified categories, a check was placed under "Other", and it was identified under "Remarks".

6. Type of Unit

The type of unit was marked only if the activity was oral reading, silent reading, or writing.

P = Pictures

This category included drawing, coloring, circling, joining, or looking at pictures.

L = Letters

This category was checked if the child was involved with reading or writing individual letters or numbers.

IW = Isolated words

IS = Isolated sentences

This unit was considered as isolated sentences even when there were several sentences if they were not related to each other in conveying a continuous message.

CD = Connected discourse

Connected discourse included two or more sentences which conveyed a continuous message. Poems, paragraphs, and stories were examples of connected discourse.

7. Assigned or Chosen Task

Assigned G = Assigned, general

This category was checked if the child was given general directions, but had a large amount of choice in selecting his particular activity. An example of a generally assigned task would be when children are directed to find something to read from the classroom collection, and each child makes his own selection.

Assigned S = Assigned, specific

When children were directed by the teacher to carry out a particular activity, that activity was considered to be specifically assigned.

Ch = Chosen

This category was checked when a pupil was free to choose his own activity. It was also checked in conjunction with "Assigned, general" in instances where the child was allowed a degree of choice within certain limits.

8. Rate of Success

At the moment of observation, the observer estimated the student's success in the particular task with which he was involved. Only writing, oral reading, and silent reading were coded in terms of rate of success. If the task involved a written response, a question mark rather than a check mark was placed in the appropriate space to indicate estimated success. Copies of these written responses were later made and examined to verify or change the estimate of success made during observation. The judgement of success was made on the basis of number of errors rather than on the basis of neatness.

H = High success

Behavioral indications of high success included such things as fluency in oral reading, proceeding with the task with little or no need for assistance in silent reading or writing tasks, and producing written work with very few errors.

M = Medium success

If the student was able to complete most of the task correctly, but required some direction and assistance to do so, he was considered to be achieving medium success.

L = Low success

The child was considered to be achieving low success

when he needed a great deal of assistance or was unable to complete a task, when many of his responses were inaccurate, or when there were behavioral signs of frustration with the task.

9. Other Activities

When either "Transition" or "Wait" was checked, no other categories were coded.

T = Transition

A pupil was coded as being in transition if he was actively preparing for an activity, or if he was actively changing from one activity to another.

W = Wait

The pupil was considered to be waiting when he had finished or could not continue an activity. This situation could occur, for example, when a child had assembled his materials for an activity, but had to wait for others in the class to get ready, or when a student was waiting for the teacher to help him or to check his work.

10. Remarks

Any relevant behavior or setting occurrence not accounted for in the coding categories, and which could assist in the translation of the coded data, was recorded in the form of brief explanatory notations under "Remarks".